HOLY JUMPERS
LIVE BY
LEAPS AND PRAYERS

New York.—Hidden on a little New Jersey farm, a community of sixty persons, one-half of them children, are trying to vitalize a complete reaction against money greed, hypocrisy, and the present-day Christian church and to keep it alive by religious hysteria.

They depend on "faith" (i. e., prayer) for food, clothing, and the bare necessities of life.

They have followed the injunction of Jesus to sell their goods, give the proceeds to the poor, and follow Him.

Medicines and physicians are forbidden, and their only treatment for disease consists of prayer and anointing with oil.

Officials of the state of New Jersey say that if any one dies after such treatment those concerned are guilty of criminal negligence and indictable for manslaughter.

The community is managed on the co-operative plan, no one receiving wages for work, and all supplies going into a common fund, the men and women sharing the work on an equal basis.

Converts are kept in a high state of religious excitement by a conglomeration of Biblical text, sophistry, and slang, and talk of modern saints and miracles.

Seeking to live according to Biblical injunction, they work themselves into a frenzy, march, dance, and leap high in the air, hence their name, Holy Jumpers.

A member of the community has already been taken to the Somerset County Insane Asylum suffering from religious mania.

What the Jumpers Are Like.

Such, in brief, is a summary of the lives of the Holy Jumpers on their farm near Weston, a station on the Reading railway five miles southwest of Bound Brook. Attention was attracted to them by a report that they are to invade New York in the manner of "Elijah" Dowie and his Zionists. What manner of people are these who would fill Broadway with their cries and wild dances? The question led to a visit to Weston.

"Where are the Holy Jumpers?" the reporter asked a farmer he met on the way.

"Right down thar on the towpath where yer see that barn and windmill," he replied. "Do they jump? Yer bet they do. I was at their prayer meeting last Sunday. One of 'em—Brother Harman, they called him—man as big as you, six feet high. Waal, Brother Harman yelled 'Hallelujah!' jest as loud as he could, gathered up his legs under him, and jumped—it looked as if he jumped most as high as that thar lamppost.

"They're praying most all the time, too. Some weeks since one of the fellers here was a-comin' up the towpath and chanced to look over toward the Jumpers' place. Sure as I'm here, thar was a Holy Jumper standin' a-top their haystack, his hands up in the air, praying for all he was worth. Guess he was praying about the hay.

"These Jumpers seem to be decent enough, though," the farmer added, "only they keep mostly to themselves."

Thus primed, the reporter walked down the Delaware and Raritan canal to the Holy Jumpers' farm to meet one of the most curious experiences to be found near New York.

Reporter Unconvinced.

He went to scoff; he could not stay to pray. The hymns, sophistry, and the plight of 30 little children were too uncanny; his sense of humor too acute. Yet, as he left, one question was burning in his mind: Are these simple, possibly misguided people solving the great social question of co-operation by the mere force of their religious zeal, where others have failed, especially in the famous Brook Farm experiment, by an excess of theory and knowledge?

"Zarephath." A big sign at a turn of the road bore the name of the Holy Jumpers' settlement. Lower down, at the entrance to the dooryard, was an arch and "The Pillar of Fire" on it.

A "saint" passed on a bicycle. He wore the uniform of the sect—a black shirt and helmet. The men in the market gardens on either side had the garments of the "workers"—blue shirts and breeches. The "sister" who received the reporter wore a dress of similar material.

In the bare reception room one sound predominated over all others. Outside were sunshine and the song of life—the click of the windmill, locusts, and bees buzzing in a cornfield, the chatter of children, the sound of hammers as the workers raised a big tent for the camp meeting. Inside was the sound of hymns pounded out on a hard-toned piano, persistently, monotonously, endlessly [illegible] thought of the most maddening in the list of ancient tortures—the steady drip of water on a man or woman's head.

"You have been very successful here!" began the reporter.

"The Lord's blessing has been upon us." The "sister" answered absently, as if in a dream or listening to the torturing hymns.

Home Is Gift of Believer.

"You own this place?"

"Yes. It was given to us about two years ago by Mrs. Garretson—Mrs. W. P. Garretson. She saw the true light—the light of the Lord in faith—she and her son and her two daughters. We have been here about a year and a half. There are 80 acres of land and 30 grown people, some of them married, but mostly young men and women, and about as many more children. They have given up all their worldly goods and followed Him."

"You must have plenty of money, then?"

"Oh, no," with a smile. "People with worldly goods are not eager to give them up and follow the Lord."

Gradually more facts came out after persistent questioning. Six years ago, Mrs. Alma White, wife of a Methodist preacher in Denver, was inspired to preach on her own account. The conference of the Methodist church would not make her a full fledged minister. But "the Lord blessed her in singing," so she started her own church. She calls it the Pentecostal Union, her neighbors, "The Pillar of Fire"; the public, the Holy Jumpers. The "sister" who was talking called it "the holiness movement—the Methodist church as it was in the days of Wesley, before people thought only of worldly things and the ministers of preaching and prayer for wage."

Mrs. White is still the head—the Mrs. Eddy, the Mrs. Piper—of the sect. She lives in Denver, where the Holy Jumpers have a Bible school and 150 missioners and the union got a charter in 1902. Mrs. White's brother, C. W. Bridwell, is the head of the farm at Weston, which is the eastern headquarters of the sect. There are other mission houses in Los Angeles, and Lafayette, Ind., with a dozen missionaries each.

Have Biblical Authority.

"What are the peculiar ceremonies of your sect? You march and dance?"

"Oh, yes," the girl replied. "Are we not told in the Bible how David danced before the Ark of the Covenant, 'yea, and was exceedingly glad?' Did not Miriam dance with joy when Israel was delivered from the hands of the Egyptians and the Red sea flowed back and confounded the enemies of the Lord's people? Again, in the New Testament the dance is mentioned as a part of religious worship."

"Yes, and singing—'even with cymbals and spawns,'" quoted the reporter.

"Yes—yes—we use cymbals, drums, too. And we often sing to the music of banjos and guitars—"

"You have harps, too?"

"We play on autoharps. But most of our music is on the piano. As we sing, we dance as they did in the old days, marching about, and jumping up and down in our gladness. That is why they call us Jumpers."

These were the words of the religionist, the sentimentalist. On the other hand: strangely bald and strangely compounded of Scriptural phrase and modern sophistry is the official explanation of the jumping habit. Here it is:

Why They Jump.

After they had organized into a church, entirely independent of everything that was backslidden and out on the line God wanted, He began to give light on many important doctrines which we preach and practice to-day. One that has meant more to our people in many ways than anything else, was the holy dance. In the old holiness movements, there was occasionally a man that would jump up and down when he was "moved by the Spirit," as they said, but for a whole church to jump at the same time in unison was something that had never been heard of in any religious organization. The Lord showed Sister White that He was waiting to revive the holy dance, and that it would be pleasing to Him for the whole church—men and women—everybody that was saved—to go to praising Him in the dance. She had seen a few men jumping around in religious services, but not in the sense of the holy dance, as we have it to-day, where all participate in unison.

In the holy dance in our services, the sexes never mingle, men dance alone and together and likewise the women. When they went at it all heaven smiled upon them, and greater things were opened up through it than they had any conception of.

One of the Denver newspapers called us the Jumpers in its headline, and from that time the public has taken it up and is the name by which we are known from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The name is perhaps attached to us in derision, but we cheerfully accept it and go on jumping. Hallelujah!

Are Early at Devotions.

The "Jumpers" get up in the morning at 6 o'clock and pray till breakfast at 9. They pray singly or together, from then till night, in the fields, on the shady banks of the neighboring brook, in the silence of their chambers. They hold services three times Sundays, with more prayers, songs, jumping, and "testimonies." When a missionary sets out to preach, they gather and pray for him. They say one of these workers left for Paterson penniless, but when they prayed a stranger came up to the traveler and gave him $2. The Jumpers cite numerous cases in which they have "prayed themselves into" shoes, uniforms and food with no trouble at all.

"Last week," to quote Bridwell, "we had no money with which to purchase certain supplies and meet some payments, but the Lord sent us in a sufficient sum, and has been sending us in smaller amounts from day to day."

New York Can Wait.

New York—"the purple woman of Babylon"—will not hear their prayers for the present. They have no immediate plans for coming here as "Elijah" Dowie did. Their missionaries, however, have already preached here as they have in Paterson, Newark, New Brunswick, Somerville, Bound Brook, and Philadelphia.

When a person is ill they pour oil on his or her body and pray—that is all, they say. The body is anointed because people mentioned in the Bible did it. Their idea of "healing" by prayer is made clear by this case reported by Bridwell. He says:

> The other day one of our sisters unwittingly swallowed a piece of broken glass, and another piece lodged in her throat. Her condition became quite serious, and we saw at once that God would have to undertake. A prayer meeting was called, in which a number of persons importuned the Lord for her immediate relief. While we were assembled the victory came; our sister began to praise the Lord and claimed deliverance. Suddenly she started to shouting uproariously and, turning about, we saw a piece of glass in her hand that had been dislodged from her throat. She had endeavored a number of times before to get it out without avail. Since then she has been all right, and testifies that a miracle was wrought in her behalf.

Conflict with State's Laws.

These methods of treating disease are in direct conflict with the laws of New Jersey. When a person dies in Weston the fact must be reported to Dr. William C. Long of Somerville, county physician of Somerset county, in which the settlement is located. A failure to do so is punishable with a fine of $500. The county physician must investigate the cause of death, and if he finds it was, due to neglect, abuse, or violence, he refers the case to one of the coroners of the county. At the office of the prosecuting attorney of Somerset county it was said that if a person should die without medical attendance and after no other treatment than the pouring of oil and prayer the persons involved could be held for criminal negligence and an indictment for manslaughter would probably follow.

The first death at Zarephath of which County Physician Long has knowledge occurred last February. A man in the community fell from the roof of a barn and was fatally injured. A doctor was hastily summoned from Bound Brook, but could not save his life. The body was buried on the farm—the first in a plot of ground set aside by the Jumpers for their graveyard. No other deaths had been reported from Zarephath, Dr. Long said.

In June last, when one of the women in the community was seized with religious insanity, there was no place to keep her in the settlement. Dr. Long was notified and had her sent to the Somerset County Insane Asylum.

As the sister continued her conversation with the reporter, the monotonous notes of the piano had been merged with the click of the windmill, the hum of bees, and the chatter of children. Then a man and a woman began to talk in the next room. They might have been quarreling. Their voices were pitched high, now both speaking together unintelligibly. Then followed silence for a moment, then a single voice in great excitement:

In Fervent Prayer.

"Oh, help, help us—Show us the way—Oh, we've done wrong—We thank Thee—We bow before Thee—Help—help us—O Lord—"

The communistic plan of Zarephath is a success, if the rich fruits of field, garden, and truck patch count for anything. At the beginning of every week the work of the colony is divided among the men and women, with little or no distinction between the sexes. The men wash dishes, cook, and make beds, just as the older boys plow and the women work in the gardens. In the Zarephath building the men are lodged at one end, the women at the other, and the children on a lower floor.

They eat two meals a day. Breakfast is at 9 in the morning and dinner at 4. Each is preceded by prayers, and perhaps with testimonies, singing, and marching.

"All of these services, the prayer meetings, our marriage service, and the ceremonies at the graves have no regular order," explained the sister; "it is largely arranged as the spirit of God moves us."

Life of the Little Jumpers.

Scriptural injunction is followed in the kitchen as well as the bare little chapel. Pork is eschewed as unclean; so are "fish without scales." Fruits and cereals form the bases of the favorite dishes.

What of the 30 little children who live in such surroundings? They pray as they play. Their ills are treated, too, with oil poured on their bodies and by prayer. They learn to jump and go to the meetings and give strange "testimonies."

Here is a prayer which the Jumpers credit to Glenn Plank, aged three:

"Dear Lord, we thank you for helping us to sing songs. I thank You for making my ear well. Supply our needs for this day and send in some dollars. My shoes are awful bad, send me in some new ones, for Jesus' sake. Amen."

Services for Children.

The children have special services to pray for clothes and the missionaries. They have prayer meetings every morning from 6:30 to 7:30 o'clock. They also have "praise services" distinct from those of their elders. They range in age from babyhood to 10 or 12 years. "In the school term" one of the Jumpers explained, "we also teach them in secular knowledge, including some of the high school branches."

Indeed, children may be called a star feature at Zarephath. The farm was given by Mrs. Garretson for a children's home as well as for missionary work, and in the notices of the camp meeting the building is called a "children's home."

Characteristic of the sect is Bridwell's description of the children when he recently returned from the west. Their enthusiasm evidently filled his heart with gladness, for he says:

"We were delighted once more to meet the children and to hear them pray and testify. God is certainly blessing this department of our work and helping the little ones to become faithful in His service. They have their little trials and experiences, and win battles which mean more in their lives than any of the great historical conflicts of this world."

A Gliding Boat.

The new gliding boat made in Paris by Levasseur and Lein consists essentially of a light, pointed main section, which is connected by a light wood platform two feet long to a flat tail 30 feet long. The forward section contains the motor, from which a shaft runs to the propeller in the tail. The rear end of the tail is almost submerged, while the forward end and the main boat float on the surface and are almost lifted out of the water by the action of the propeller. The new 50 horsepower eight cylinder Antoinette motor is used. In calm weather the new form of boat glides very rapidly on the surface of the water and in rough water—this being the special advantage claimed over sliding and ordinary boats—it is able to run at a fair speed.

Business Appreciation.

Herr Hirsch—That man Levi has got his eye on our Rosa. He's a thundering good man of business and he can have her if he wants. He once got some money out of me in payment for some things I had of him.

How She Managed

By M. Vaughn

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The Hopkinses were holding an indignation meeting.

"All the fambly," Mother Hopkins said, but all the "fambly" were not represented.

There was Tom and his wife Jerusha and Melindy and Sophia and their husbands. But John and John's wife Claribel, where were they? Ah, there on my story hinges.

This indignation meeting was all on account of John's wife and John's extravagance.

"I knowed it," wailed Mother Hopkins, "I knowed it all the time, jest as well as I do now. Jerusha always sed so an' I told John so afore he was marri'd."

"Upland farms don't yield sech big profits that a man can afford hangin' lamps and chiny dishes and the like," suggested Sophia.

"John's wife signed $30 to the minister's salary fer next year," said Jerusha.

"Well, now," remarked Father Hopkins, "it's my private 'pinion, publicly expressed, that you're all a-meddlin' with what don't consarn 'ye."

"Ain't we, as a fambly, consarned in actions that's threatenin' rewination to one of its members?" demanded mother.

"I don't see no rewination a-threatenin' of anybody," replied father.

"Well, if it keeps on, John'll be bankrupt or suthin', and we'd jest better take the matter in hand and give 'em a warnin' word afore it's forever too late. Mebbe he's a-borrowin' money fer all this," suggested Jerusha.

And then they discussed the matter, as to who John had probably borrowed money of, and how much, and whether he would be likely to give a "mortgage" or not.

But as all things must come to an end, so did this indignation meeting,

"Nothing New!" Shouted Jerusha.

and the "children" departed one by one, until father and mother were left alone.

"Father," said mother, "if John comes over here to-morrow, you jest ask him if he's been a-borrowin' of any money, and where, and how much, and how and when he ever expects to pay it back, at the rate they've been a-carryin' on. If you don't, I'll do it myself the very first time I see him, and I shan't be 'mealy-mouthed' about it, nuther; you know that."

Yes, father knew that. And if John really was elected to be questioned, he felt that the better way was to question him himself.

Accordingly, when John came by the next day on his way to town, Father Hopkins went out and asked to be taken as a "passenger."

John gave a most willing assent, and they drove off together.

All the way the old man was haunted by the thought of the unpleasant task set before him. And John, on his part, wondered what made his father so fidgety and absent-minded.

On the way home John said:

"I have some oysters in that paper pail, father; be careful not to upset it. They are for poor old Granny Phelps; and those oranges you saw me buying are for little hunch-back Sandy. Claribel was down there yesterday, and she was so struck by their poverty that she charged me to 'get something good for those poor people.'"

Father Hopkins felt that now was the time to broach the hated subject, and while inwardly he writhed under the task, yet putting on a brave face, he said in a meek tone:

"And I heerd down to town that Claribel had clothed them two younguns of Widder Nelson's and started 'em to school, aides buyin' their books for 'em."

John admitted that such was the case.

"John," said the old man, a little nervous quaver in his voice, "John, ye be'n't a-goin' in a trifle too deep, be ye? Ye're doin' a powerful sight of good, but it must cost a heap o' money fer plain farmers. I s'pose, John, ye know yer own bizniss, of course, but mother's a-gittin' a mite anxious, and wonders—" Here the old man made a dash at the oyster bucket, which in his nervousness he had nearly kicked over. "She wonders if ye're a-havin' to borry money."

"No, father, I've borrowed no money, for, to tell the truth, I've not paid for what I've got," answered John, while he looked away to hide the merriment that danced in his eyes.

"I wouldn't a-b'leeved it!" cried the old man aghast. "I b'leeve in charity, but 'charity begins to home,' as the sayin' is, and if you ain't a-payin' fer 'em, John, why, somebody has got to lose 'em."

"No, nobody shall lose. Claribel pays for them herself. Don't worry, father, it's all right," and the young man's honest blue eyes smiled down into the old man's dim ones in such a straightforward way, that his heart was set at rest.

"I told mother I was sure it was. But—well—some of the rest had got her skeered, and she was bound ter know."

"Yes, Jerusha goes about agitating the matter more than anyone else. She don't want to do Claribel any injury, but she can't keep her tongue still. She'd be a pretty good woman if she didn't talk so much, and do so much looking after other people's affairs."

"Claribel pays fer 'em!" exclaimed Jerusha. "Jest a poor minister's darter; she hadn't no money of her own. How does she make it? Hirin' her work done?" with a scornful laugh. "It's like I've heard o' folks a-livin' off the interest of their debts."

During the next six weeks Jerusha "found out" and reported to the rest of the "fambly" how Claribel had declared that something must be done to bring in the many children of the village, who claimed Sunday as a legal holiday, and never dreamed of entering the dull Sunday school that the one little church in the village afforded.

Acting on this, she had purchased a juvenile library of 50 books, furnished Scripture text cards and papers, besides, on several occasions, meeting the excuses of some of the most unwilling ones by furnishing hat, shoes or mittens (as the case might require), amongst those she found in her searchings amongst the "highways and hedges. John had kept his own counsel, but a sharp lookout since his conversation with his father.

Until the last Sunday, Claribel, absorbed in her work, had not marked the averted looks and ominous glances in her direction, although they had been apparent to her husband.

But on that day, the little woman went home filled with dismay and sorely wounded in heart.

At church Sophia and Melindy had passed her by with a cool nod. Jerusha had been blind, so to speak, since "none are so blind as those who will not see."

"Now, little woman," said John, as they drove homeward, "your secret is bound to come out. I will have them all come to our house Tuesday evening, and you shall tell it yourself."

So Tuesday night found the "fambly" on their way to "John's."

Although hospitably received when they arrived at "John's," conversation seemed bound to lag. John suggested that if Claribel would "say her say," they might all "feel better."

So in a few words Claribel explained how it was. That she had once been a correspondent to several magazines, but had expected when she took charge of her own home to lay aside her literary work. But loving the work, and being impressed by the poverty in and about the village, also the lack of interest on the part of the children in school, Sunday school, or, in fact, anything good, she had resolved to again take up her pen, and by careful management she could put out a part of her work, and make much more than she could save by trying to do it all herself.

"I have bought some good books and a few pretty things for my house," said she, "although I have gotten nothing new to wear."

"Nothing new!" shouted Jerusha. "What did you have on in town last week? And what did you wear last Sunday?"

"In town I wore my lavender wedding dress, colored a dark blue; and on Sunday, a white Flemish tricot (the dress I graduated in), colored black," was the quiet answer. "I flatter myself that I have two very respectable suits from them. What I have given away cost me not over a hundred dollars, and I have saved as much more for ourselves; I—"

"I knowed it," yelled Father Hopkins, unable to restrain himself longer. "I knowed it all the time, and I told you all so. But," turning to Claribel, "what made you so still about it?"

"Because I thought you would think me silly to suppose I could write anything worth publishing; what I wrote seemed so insignificant to me that I did not want anyone I knew to read the wretched yarns I spun."

Then arose a babel of expostulations, explanations, apologies and congratulations.

And Claribel's guests left that night believing that through Claribel the name of Hopkins was certain to be immortalized.